



## DEGETTE BLASTS BUSH ON POOR IRAQ PLANNING

1 May 2004 Page 30A

Tillie Fong, Rocky Mountain News  
Rocky Mountain News

U.S. Rep. Diana DeGette blasted President Bush on Friday, saying he's not providing adequate support for American troops in Iraq.

"Because of an appalling lack of planning, the country stands on the brink of disaster and chaos," she said. "The mission is not accomplished."

DeGette, D-Denver, who was flanked by members of Colorado Veterans for Kerry, spoke at a news conference the day before the one-year anniversary of Bush's announcement that the war was over.

She noted that in April alone, more than a hundred soldiers have died - a clear indication that the country is not ready for self- management. "We still have no idea of who the Iraqi leaders are," she said. "We need to identify Iraqi leaders who can take control of the government."

She criticized Bush's insistence on the June 30 deadline for the hand over of power as a political ploy, more to bolster his chances at re-election than a realistic assessment of what's going on in Iraq.

DeGette also criticized Bush for not planning for the cost of the war, which recently required a \$50 billion appropriation request.

"He never put that in his budget," she said.

"I think the president can't have it both ways: have huge tax cuts for the wealthy and pay for the federal government."

She said she would support the \$50 billion appropriation for the Iraq, but that the president needs to justify the expense. "In the last appropriation, he had no-bid contracts for Halliburton," she said.

Bill Holen, a Vietnam veteran who heads the Colorado Veterans for Kerry, said it was important for his group to speak out.

"This war is becoming the most disastrous intervention in history," he said.

Photo; Caption: Air Force Maj. Bonnie O'Leary, 81, was among the Colorado Veterans for Kerry attending a news conference given by U.S. Rep. Diana DeGette on Friday. O'Leary served in the armed forces from 1952 to 1972. BARRY GUTIERREZ / ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS